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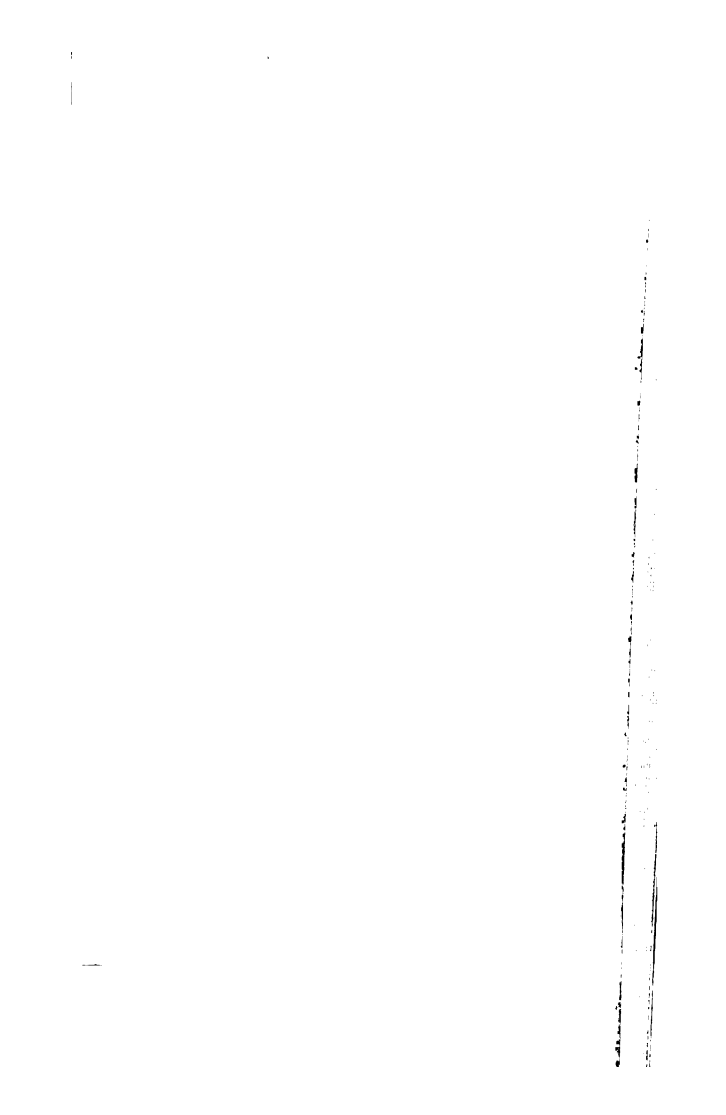


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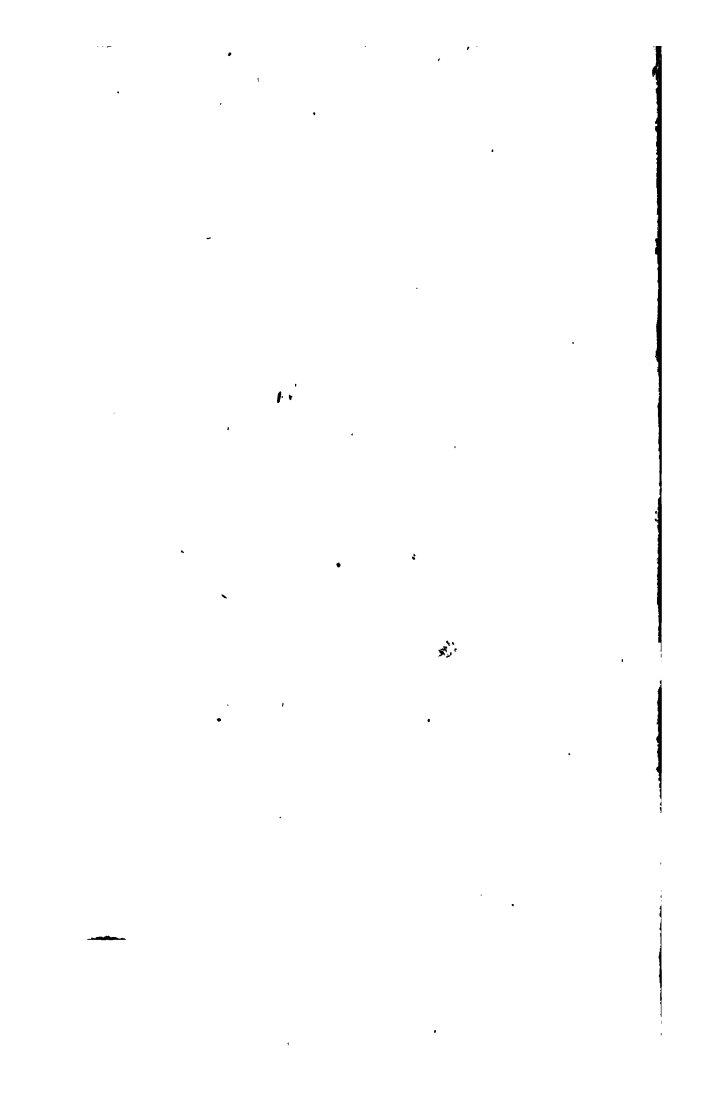


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PAUL AND VIRGINIA.



"How can you find so many reasons for your departure, and not one that may induce you to stay among us?"

Page 74.

St. Pierre, Jacques
THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Adventures, Love, and Constancy,

OF

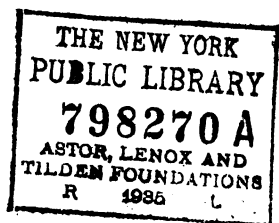
PAUL AND VIRGINIA.

Concord:

PUBLISHED BY J. B. MOORE.

1824.

P. 573



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Paul and Virginia.

ABOUT the year 1735, a young man, of the name of Monsieur De la Tour, a native of Normandy, after having in vain tried to gain employment to support an amiable wife and expected infant, in despite of the cruel neglect of his friends, who had forsaken him on account of his marrying against their consent, took up his residence in the valley of Port Louis, in the Isle of France, af-

ter having bade a long farewell to his native country. Madame De la Tour was descended from a rich and ancient family in the south part of France, but had forfeited her fortune by an union with him, in opposition to her relations, who withheld their consent, because he was not honoured with as noble a pedigree as that which they had to boast of. Unfortunately for him, he landed at the Island at the very period of time when the unhealthy season set in, and died soon after of a pestilential fever.

The effects of which he died possessed were rapaciously seized

by strangers; and his wife, whom he had left behind him, found herself, at the very moment when she was forming plans of future happiness, a widow, pregnant, and without any other friend in the world than a female negro, in a country where she was a stranger.

In the place, to which Madame De la Tour had retreated, dwelt a young woman of a good-natured, lively, and tender disposition; her name was Marguerite; she was born in Brittany, of a family of peasants, by whom she was tenderly beloved, and with whom she might have passed her time in rural

innocence, if she had not listened to a gentleman, who, under promise of marriage, triumphed over her simplicity, and then left her in a state of pregnancy, without making the smallest provision for the child she was about to bring into the world. Overwhelmed with grief and vexation, the wretched Marguerite resolved to leave the place of her birth forever, and retire to some distant colony, where her error might be buried in oblivion, since she had lost the only portion which a poor and honest girl can boast of—her reputation. An old black, whom she had purchased with some borrowed money,

ney, assisted her in cultivating the small spot which she had chosen for an assylum ;—and here it was that Madame De la Tour, assisted by her negress, found her in the act of suckling her child, who was delighted at meeting with a female in a situation nearly the same with her own ; and immediately informed her, in a few words, of the principal occurrences of her past life.—Marguerite was moved with pity at the recital ; and willing rather to merit her confidence than her esteem, made a brief narration of her own misfortunes, even without concealing the error which she had been

guilty of; and then, after shedding a flood of tears, made her an offer of her hut and friendship. Madame De la Tour, moved with this kind reception, took her in her arms, and exclaimed, "Surely heaven at length has put a period to my woes, since it has inspired you with more goodness towards me than I ever received at the hands of my relations."—The emotions of these new friends were no sooner subsided, than Marguerite called in La Varole, an elderly peasant, who resided in an adjacent hut, and whom she always consulted in cases of emergency.—He was no sooner seated, than she

gave him a brief abstract of her friend's misfortunes; upon which the venerable peasant, perceiving Madame De la Tour to be pregnant, advised the two friends, for the interest of their children, and to prevent the intrusion of other settlers, to divide equally the property of the wild sequestered valley between them, which contained about twenty acres. This proposal was readily agreed to, and the dividing it immediately undertaken by the worthy peasant, who marked out two equal portions of land, the one extending from the summit of the mountain to a white cliff, the other comprised

all the foot of the mountain, and extended along the banks of the river to a rising eminence.

La Varole had no sooner made this division, than he persuaded the two friends to draw lots for the same; when the higher station fell to Madame de la Tour, and the lower one to Marguerite, upon which the ladies declared themselves perfectly contented, each with her respective lot, at the same time requesting that he would place their habitation as close to each other as possible, in order that they might enjoy the sweet and soothing intercourse of friendship without inter-

ruption. To this La Varole readily assented ; and in a few days, with the assistance of Domingo, built a small but neat cottage adjoining to that of Marguerite.

The new cottage was but just finished, when Madame De la Tour was delivered of a fine girl. And when the smiling infant was enrolled a member of the christian religion, she gave her the name of Virginia. The two cottages, by the time of Madame De la Tour's recovery, began to be tolerably comfortable, partly through the attention of their worthy friend La Varole, but still more so by the assiduity and

industry of the two slaves. Marguerite's, whom they called Domingo, was an Ilof black, still strong and hearty, though far advanced in years, and possessed of great experience and good natural sense. He understood the cultivation of the ground, both sterile and fruitful, perfectly well, and adapted the several seeds to their different soils with the greatest nicety, particularly sowing small millet and Indian corn where the ground was of an inferior quality, and a little wheat where it was good, not forgetting among the rest to sow a few tobacco-plants, where-with, when they were come to per-

fection, he might sooth his own cares and those of his worthy mistresses. He also, when occasion required, cut fire-wood in the mountains. He was particularly attached to Marguerite, and very little less to Madame De la Tour, whose female slave he married a short time after the birth of Virginia. He loved his wife tenderly, whose name was Mary. She was born at Madagascar, and had brought with her from thence several mechanical arts, particularly the useful one of making baskets, and a kind of stuff called pagnes, with the long grass that grew in the adjacent forest ; and to all these useful

acquisitions she added the pleasing one of cleanliness. She had the care of dressing their victuals, breeding and feeding their small stock of poultry, and of going sometimes to Port Louis to dispose of the superfluity of the two plantations, which was considerable. These two slaves, together with a couple of goats, brought up with the children, and a large dog, who watched out of doors in the night, formed the whole of the domestic department of the two little farms.

As for the two friends, they spun cotton from morning to night; which employment just served to procure

for themselves and their families the common necessities of life : but in other respects they were so ill provided, that they never wore shoes except on a Sunday, when they went early in the morning to the church of Pamplémousses.

Nothing could exceed the attachment of the infants even in their cradle ; and the first names they learned to give each other, upon their coming to the use of speech, was that of brother and sister. As soon as they grew up, the management of the household affairs devolved on Virginia, while Paul, who was never idle, either worked in the

garden with Domingo, or followed him with a little hatchet to the woods ; where, if in the course of his rambles, he espied any flower or fruit more curious than common, he immediately gathered and bore it in triumph to his beloved sister, whose culinary endeavours in preparing the frugal repast, which was always ready at his return from his daily toils, met with his warmest approbation.

In this simple and artless manner passed the infantine years of Paul and Virginia. Already they partook of the household cares with their parents. Virginia arising at

the dawn of day, hastened to draw water from an adjacent spring : which done, she prepared the breakfast ; soon after which, when the sun illuminated the points of the mountain with his golden rays, Marguerite would repair with her son to Madame De la Tour's habitation, where this little family offered up their morning orisons to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. This dutiful ceremony always preceded their first repast, which they often partook of before the door of the cottage, seated on the mossy ground, under the shade of a plaintain tree, whose solid fruit furnished their ta-

ble with food ready prepared to their hands, while its long and glossy leaves answered with them the purposes of table linen.

This plain but wholesome manner of living, gave additional growth and vigour to the persons of these amiable children, while their placid countenances expressed the purity and peace that was within their breasts; and thus by the time Virginia had attained her twelfth year, her figure was neatly formed; her light hair overshadowed her forehead abundantly, while her blue eyes and coral lips gave a most tender expression to the *tout ensemble*

of her person. Her eyes sparkled with an indescribable vivacity, when she spoke ; and when silent, they had a cast upward, which gave them an expression of sensibility, or rather that of tender melancholy. The figure of Paul already began to display the graces of manhood. He was considerably taller than his foster sister, his complexion more brown, his nose more aquiline ; and his eyes, which were black, would have been too piercing, had it not been for the long eye-lashes which shaded, and at the same time gave them an inexpressible degree of softness.

In the mean time, Madame de la Tour, who watched over the opening graces of her daughter with a mother's eye, felt maternal anxiety increase with her tenderness, and would often exclaim to Marguerite, "Oh, heavens ! if I should die, what would become of Virginia, destitute as she is of fortune or estate ?" This reflection naturally reminded her of an aunt whom she had in France, who was a woman of quality, rich, old, and a great biggot. This aunt had behaved exceedingly cruel on account of her marriage, and therefore she held no correspondence with her ; but now she resolved to stifle

her resentment for the sake of her daughter, and accordingly wrote to her, informing her of the sudden death of her husband, the birth of Virginia, and her apprehension of leaving the latter unprovided for. No answer, however, came, until the period of three years was nearly expired ; when she was informed that the governor of the island had a letter for her from her aunt. She flew immediately to Port Louis, regardless of the homely figure she cut ; so much was her mind absorbed with the fond expectations which maternal hope and joy had formed to her enraptured fancy. On her arrival

at the castle, upon her name being annou¹nced, she was introduced to the governor, who gave her the letter from her aunt ; in which the latter tauntingly informed her she deserved all she had m¹et with, for having married an adventurer ; that the sudden death of her husband was a punishment inflicted on her by heaven for her disobedience ; till at length, having vented all her abuse upon her unfortunate niece, she finished with an high coloured eulogium on her condescension ; adding, in the postscript, that she had recommended her niece to the governor. This was indeed very true ; but she had

done it in such a manner as rather injured than promoted her in the favour of the latter. Though this duplicity of the aunt, Madame De la Tour was received with the coolest indifference by the governor, who, at the same time as he promised to see what could be done for Virginia, strongly reprimanded her for having fled in the face of so respectable a relation as her aunt.

She returned home, her heart wounded with grief, and full of bitterness. Upon her arrival, she threw herself into a chair; and flinging her aunt's letter upon the table, exclaimed to her friend, "Behold

the reward of twelve years' patience!" when the excess of emotion deprived her of the power of utterance. At this sight Virginia burst into tears, pressing alternately the hands of her mother and Marguerite to her lips and heart ; while Paul, his eyes inflamed with rage, sobbed, clenched his hands, and stamped, not knowing whom he might blame for the scene of misery before him. By such tender marks of friendship, her sorrow was at length dissipated.— She clasped Paul and Virginia in her arms, exclaimed at the same time, "My dear children ! you, you are the cause of all my affliction ; and

yet you are the source of all my felicity." The infant minds of Paul and Virginia did not comprehend this reflection ; but when they saw her returning to a state of calmness, they smiled, and continued their carresses. Thus tranquility was once more restored, in despite of what had passed, as a transient storm serves to give verdure to the face of nature.

Paul at twelve years of age was more robust than the generality of Europeans at fifteen, and his chief delight was in embellishing the plantations, which Domingo had only cultivated. Disposing the trees in such a manner that the whole could be command-

ed at one view, he planted in the middle of the hollow such plants as were of low growth ; behind these grew the shrubs ; then trees of the common height ; and above all these, rose majestically the venerable lofty pines that closed the prospect ; the whole presenting to view a verdant amphitheatre, spread with a diversity of fruits and flowers, a variety of vegetables, and fields well stored with rice and corn ; while in blending these various productions to his own fancy he followed the designs of nature. Every plant grew in its proper soil, and every spot seemed ornamented by her hand. The wa-

ters which descended from the summits of the rocks formed, in some parts of the valley, either liquid fountains or large mirrors of chrystal, in whose clear bosoms the trees in blossoms, the bending rocks, and azure heavens, were portrayed with redoubled splendour ; in short, the whole was so well contrived, that notwithstanding the extreme irregularity of the ground, most of the plantations were easy of access.— On the point of a neighbouring rock which projected from the mountain, one might obtain a clear view of the inclosure, and of the distant ocean, together with (at times) the pleas-

ing sight of a vessel coming from Europe. On this rock the two families used to assemble on an evening, where they enjoyed in silence the freshness of the air, the fragrance of the flowers, the murmurs of the fountains, and the last blended harmonies of light and shade. That rock, which we just mentioned, and from whence the approach of La Varole could be discerned for several yards distance, was called the Discovery of Friendship.

Paul and Virginia, amid their rural sports, had planted a bamboo on that spot ; and as soon as they perceived him coming, would hoist up

a little white flag as a signal of his approach, taking the hint from seeing the natives hoist a flag upon the neighbouring mountain on the appearance of a vessel at sea.

But of all these charming retreats, none could be more agreeable than the one, which they called the Repose of Virginia ; at the foot of the rock called the Discovery of Friendship, there was an hollow, or nook, from whence issued a fountain, forming in its source a small spot of marshy ground, in the midst of a fine field of rich grass. When Marguerite was delivered of Paul, La Varole made her a present of an Indian co-

coa, which she planted on the border of the last-mentioned place, in order that the tree which it should happen to produce might serve as a mark of the epoch of the birth of her son ; which mode of calculation was also adopted by Madame De la Tour, who planted another at the birth of Virginia. These two trees formed all the records of the family, while the one was called "the tree of Paul," and the other "the tree of Virginia." They grew in the same proportion, as the two young people whose names they bore, of an unequal height, till, at the expiration of twelve years, they had

raised their heads considerably above the cottages. Already their tender stalks began to entwine among each other ; the young branches of these cocoas hung pendant over the basin of the fountain. With the exception of this small plantation, the nook of the rock had been left undecorated by any other hand than that of nature. Virginia loved to repose herself on the borders of this fountain, decorated with a degree of magnificence at once both wild and sublime. Often would she seat herself under the cocoa trees, where she sometimes led her goats to graz and as she prepared cheeses fro

their milk, was delighted to see them browse.

Paul no sooner observed Virginia to be fond of this spot, than he brought thither from the neighbouring forest a great variety of birds' nests ; the result of which was, that the old birds followed their young one, and soon established themselves in this new colony, to which they were in some measure induced by the kind usage of Virginia, who, from time to time, threw among them a few grains of rice, maize, and millet. Accordingly, as soon as she appeared, the whistling black-bird, the amadavid bird, so remark-

able for the peculiar softness of its note ; and the cardinals, whose plumage is the colour of flame, forsook their bushes : while the paroquet, green as an emerald, descended from the adjacent fan palms, and the partridge ran along the grass. Thus they all advanced undauntedly toward her, like a brood of chickens ; and while they were enjoying themselves over the scattered grains which had fallen from the hands of benevolence ; Paul and Virginia used to observe with inexpressible delight their sports, their repasts, and their loves.

Thus passed the early days of

these amiable children in innocence, and in the exercise of benevolence toward the whole living part of the creation, contentment was the beloved inmate of their cottages ; and as they often sat under the shade of the rocks, it gave an additional zest to their rural repasts, which cost no animal its life, while gourds filled with milk, fresh eggs, rice, cakes neatly laid upon plaintain-leaves, baskets replete with mangoes, oranges, pomegranates, and bread-fruit, furnished the most delicious juices. In the rainy seasons, the two families assembled together in one of the huts, where they employed them-

selves in weaving mats of grass and baskets of bamboos. Rakes, spades, hatchets, were ranged along the walls of their hut in the neatest order; and near those instruments of agriculture were placed the productions of their labours, namely, sacks of rice, sheaves of corn, and baskets of plantain. Some small degree of luxury is most commonly the concomitant of plenty. Virginia, instructed by her mother and Marguerite, made sherbert cordials from the juice of the sugar cane, the orange, and the citron. At night they supped by the light of a lamp; after which, Madame de la Tour, or Mar-

guerite, recounted some tale or history, while their children listened with eager sensibility ; after which, they would retire to rest, impatient to meet again the next morning.

Paul, accompanied by his beloved Virginia, would frequently wander up and down the plantations, and sometimes they would prolong their walk along the sloping part of the mountain, until they came to the dwelling of La Varole, where they often found a dinner prepared against their arrival, on the banks of a little river which glided by his cottage. Upon these occasions that venerable peasant would produce a

bottle or two of old wine, in order to heighten the gaiety of their Indian repast by the cordial productions of Europe. These repasts were frequently succeeded by the songs of Virginia, chiefly treating on the pleasures of a rural life.— Sometimes she performed a pantomime with Paul, after the manner of the blacks. Virginia, choosing the subject from some of the most interesting histories which she had heard her mother read, represented the most striking passages with the most elegant simplicity. At the sound of Domingo's tamtam, she sometimes appeared on the grass-

plat, bearing a pitcher on her head, and advancing with a timid step to draw water. Domingo and Mary, personating the shepherds of Median, forbade her to approach, and sternly repulsed her ; upon which, Paul would fly to her, and beat away the shepherds ; then fill Virginia's pitcher ; and placing it on her head, bind her brows at the same time with a crown of the Madagascar periwinkle, which served to heighten the delicacy of her skin. Upon these occasions La Varole, joining their sports, would represent the part of Raguel, and bestow on Paul his daughter Zephorah in marriage.

Paul and Virginia had neither clock, almanack, nor books of chronology, history, or philosophy. The periods of their lives were regulated by those of nature ; they knew the hour of the day only by the shadow of the trees ; the seasons, by the times those trees bore flowers or fruits ; and the years, by the number of harvests ; while these pleasing images gave an inexpressible charm to their conversation. "It is time to dine," said Virginia to the family ; "the shadows of the plantain-trees are at their roots." Another time she would say, "I know night is near at hand, for the tama-

rinds close their leaves." "When will you come to see us?" some of the youthful neighbours would inquire; to which Virginia replied, "At the time of the sugar-cane;" to which they answered, "it will then be the sweeter, and much more agreeable." When any one questioned her concerning the age of herself and Paul, she would reply, "My brother is of the same age as the great cocoa-tree of the fountain, and I number my years with those of the little one; the mangoes have borne fruit twelve times, and the orange trees four-and-twenty times, since I made my appearance in the world."

Frequently, when they were alone, Paul would, on his return from labour, address himself to his beloved Virginia as follows :—" When I am fatigued with the toils of the day, the sight of you instantly refreshes me. If, when on the top of the mountain, I perceive you in the valley below, methinks I behold a blushing rose in the midst of the orchard. Tell me, my dear sister, by what charm you have enchanted me. Surely it cannot be your wisdom, since our mothers have more than either of us ; nor by your caresses, since they embrace me much oftener than you do ; it must certain-

ly then be through your goodness. Here, my beloved, eat this honeycomb, which I have taken from the top of a rock." To this she replied, "O! my dear brother, the rays of the sun in the morning at the top of the mountain give me less joy than the sight of you. I love my mother and your's most tenderly; but when they call you their son, I love them almost to adoration. You ask, why you love me. Look at the birds trained up in the same nests; they love like me, and for the same reason, because they are always together. Hark how they call and answer one another from tree to

tree ; so when echo bears to my ears the airs which you play on your flute at the summit of the mountain, I repeat the words in the bottom of the valley. I pray every day for my mother, for thine, for thee, and for our poor servants ; but when I pronounce thy name, my devotion seems to receive new strength, and I fervently implore the Divine Author of our being to protect you from every danger.—
“Why will you go so far,” continued the lovely maid, looking with the utmost tenderness in his face.
“Why will you climb so high in search of fruit-trees and flowers for

me ? How much you are fatigued ! Thou art in a most violent perspiration." She would then in the kindest manner, wipe the damp off his brow with her little white handkerchief.

About this time, one of those summers which frequently desolates such countries as are situated between the tropics, spread its destructive horrors over the island. It was the end of December, when the sun, having entered Capricorn, darts for the space of three weeks its vertical fires over the Isle of France.—The south wind, which blows there nearly the whole year, now blew no

longer ; while the sun's scorching rays penetrated into the very bowels of the earth. The drooping cattle on the sides of the hills stretched out their necks towards heaven ; and panting for air, made the valley reverberate with their melancholy lowings. The air resounded with the buz of insects, who sought to allay their thirst with the blood of men and beasts. On one of those sultry evenings Virginia arose, restless and uneasy, walked about a few paces, and then went to bed again ; but in no attitude could she find either slumber or repose. Worn out with fatigue, she again left her

bed, and bent her way by the light of the moon to her favourite fountain, which, in spite of the drought, still flowed in silver threads down the brown sides of the rock. Exhausted with the heat, she eagerly precipitated herself into the basin ; when its coolness re-animated her spirits ; but more especially the recollection that in that bath her mother and Marguerite had amused themselves with bathing her and Paul together in their infancy. These pleasing thoughts were however soon dissipated, when she reflected on the hour of the night, and the profound solitude which reigned a-

round. Her imagination grew disordered, and she fled from those dangerous shades to her mother, in order to find an asylum.

In the mean time, the intense heat drew from the ocean vapours, which covered the island like a vast parasol, and gathered round the summits of the mountains, while long flakes of fire darted forth every now and then from their foggy peaks. Immediately, the most tremendous thunder made the heavens resound, while it shook the woods, the plains, and the vallies, to their very centre. The rains poured from the skies like a second flood, and ran in foaming

torrents down the mountain, at whose foot was built the cottages of the two friends ; in consequence of which, the valley beneath instantly became a little sea ; the plot of ground on which the two houses were situated was an island ; and also the entrance of the valley, a sluice, through which the roaring waters rushed precipitately, carrying before them vast quantities of earth, trees, and pieces of rocks.

Alarmed at this convulsion of the elements, the two affrighted families humbled themselves in prayer before their Creator, in the dwelling of Madame De la Tour, whose

roof cracked horribly when attacked by the winds which blew with the utmost violence ; while the flashes of lightening were so vivid and frequent as to render every object from without (although the doors and windows were well fastened) discernable through the joints and crevices of the shutters. The intrepid Paul, followed by Domingo, went from one cottage to the other, regardless of the fury of the tempest, in one place supporting a partition with a buttress, and in another driving a stake where it was most wanted, returning only occasionally in order to console his be-

loved Virginia with the hopes of the storm being nearly exhausted, which however did not take place until the evening, when the rain ceased, the trade-winds of the south resumed their ordinary course, the tempestuous clouds were thrown to the north-east, and the setting sun made his appearance once more in the northern hemisphere.

The first wish of Virginia, after she recovered from her terror, was to pay a visit to the spot called her repose ; when Paul advanced toward her with a timid air, and offered the assistance of his arm, which she accepted with a smile,

and they left the cottage together. The air was fresh and clear, and white vapours arose from the tops of the mountains, furrowed here and there by the foam of the torrents that had so lately poured down their sides. As for the garden, the whole of it was reversed, the roots of the fruit-trees being for the most part laid bare, while prodigious heaps of sand covered the meadows, and completely filled the bath of Virginia; but the two cocoa-trees remained unhurt, though they were no longer surrounded either by turf arbours, or the feathered race, except the amadavid birds, who sat on

the adjacent rocks lamenting, in mournful notes, the loss of their young. The sight of this general desolation, excited in the tender bosom of Virginia the strongest emotions of pity, and she exclaimed to Paul, "Alas ! you brought birds here, and the hurricane has destroyed them. You planted this garden, and the late storm has rendered it desolate. From this we may learn, that every thing on earth, my dear brother, perishes, and that heaven alone is unchangeable."

At this juncture, a vessel arrived from France, which brought a letter to Madame de la Tour from her

aunt. The fear of approaching death had struck the latter so forcibly (during a severe fit of illness, which had left her in a state of weakness, rendered incurable by old age,) that she began to repent of her rigorous behaviour to the family of her deceased nephew, and accordingly desired her niece to return to France, or that in case her health would not admit of so long a journey, she strongly enjoined her to send Virginia, on whom she could bestow an education suitable to the station she was to fill ; and when of age, see her splendidly married ; and finally, upon her decease, leave her

the inheritance of her entire fortune. The contents of this letter spread an universal alarm among the family. Domingo and Mary wept at the thought of losing their mistress ; while Paul, petrified with astonishment, seemed as if his heart was bursting with indignation ; and Virginia, with her eyes fixed upon her mother, was unable to utter a syllable. “ Is it possible you can resolve to leave us ? ” cried Marguerite, with emotion, to Madame De la Tour. “ Ah ! no, my dear friend,” replied the latter ; “ no, my beloved children ! I will never leave you. With you I have lived, and in the same

dear society I will die. In your affection alone have I found happiness ; and if my health is rather impaired, my former troubles are the occasion of it. I have been deeply wounded in the heart by the cruelty of my relations, and the death of my husband ; but I have since experienced more consolation and felicity with you, under this humble roof, than it was in the power of all the riches of my family to procure me in my native country." At this conciliating discourse every eye was moistened with the tears of delight ; and Paul, pressing Madame De la Tour in his arms, exclaimed, " No,

thou best of friends ! I will never leave the mother of my dear Virginia, I will not go to the Indies.— We will all work for you my dear mother, and you shall never know what it is to want while you remain with us.”

The next day at sun-rise, while they were offering up, as was customary with them, their morning prayers to the divine Ruler of the earth, Domingo came running to inform them that a gentleman on horseback, attended by two slaves, was coming towards the plantation. This person arrived soon after, and proved to be Monsieur De La Bour-

donay, the governor. He entered the cottage, where he found the family at breakfast, and then addressing himself to Madame De la Tour, observed, that although affairs of state drew his thoughts too much from the affairs of individuals, yet she had many claims to his good offices.—“You have, madame,” continued he, “an aunt at Paris, who is a woman of quality, and immensely rich.—She expects you with the utmost impatience, as I find she intends to leave you her whole fortune upon her decease.” To this she replied, “the ill state of health under which she laboured, would not permit her

to take so long a voyage." "At least," replied the governor, "you cannot wish, without the greatest injustice, to deprive your daughter, who is so young and handsome, of an estate at once so noble and extensive. I will not conceal from you, that your aunt has given me authority to force you to return, if it should be necessary, having sent official letters to me for that purpose ; but wishing only to exert my power in the promotion of the people's happiness whom I govern, I expect that a person of your superior sense and experience will submit to the voluntary sacrifice of

a few years, since on that your daughter's future establishment in the world, and the future happiness of the latter part of your life depends." Having said this he laid a large bag of piastres, which had been carried by one of the slaves, on the table, at the same time informing Madame De la Tour that her aunt had sent them to defray the expenses that might be incurred in the necessary preparations for Virginia's departure ; concluding this piece of information with a gentle rebuke for not having had recourse to him in her troubles ; at the same time praising in the warm-

est terms the noble fortitude with which she had endured her misfortunes.

Monsieur Bourdonaye, upon being asked by Madame De la Tour to partake of their humble repast, accepted of the invitation, and placed himself next to the latter lady at table ; where he breakfasted, after the Creolian fashion, upon coffee mixed with rice boiled in water. He was delighted with the order and cleanliness that were so conspicuous in every part of the cottage ; the strict union which seemed to bind these two interesting families together ; and, above all,

the zeal and attention with which their desires were studied by their old domestics. After breakfast, he took Madame De la Tour aside, to tell her that an opportunity then offered of sending Virginia to France in a ship which would sail from thence in a few days for that country, adding, that he would recommend her to a female relation of his, who would also be a passenger in the same ship. "Take my advice, madame," continued he, "accept the offer, and think not for a moment of giving up a fortune so immense, rather than be separated from your daughter a few years. Besides your

aunt's state of health is such, that I am credibly informed by her friends, she cannot live many years longer. Remember that fortune does not offer her bounty every day ; therefore think seriously, and consult your friends." This Madame De la Tour promised to do, observing, however, that the final decision rested upon gaining Virginia's approbation, as she prized her happiness too much to force her to any thing against her inclination, which she was certain would never dictate any thing repugnant to the laws of virtue. Monsieur Bourdonaye then returned with Madame De la Tour

to the company ; and, after taking leave, mounted his horse, and departed for Port Louis.

Madame Dé la Tour was by no means sorry that an opportunity presented itself of separating Paul and Virginia for a few years, and at the same time of providing so amply for their future welfare ; and the first opportunity took her daughter aside, and told her what had passed between her and the governor ; but being resolved to leave Virginia entirely to her own inclination, she said, “ My dear child, I will not lay any restraint upon your inclination. Reflect at leisure ; but be

careful and do nothing rashly, and consider that the happiness and fortune of your beloved Paul's life depends upon you."

Toward evening, as they were sitting together by themselves, their confessor entered the room. He was an ecclesiastic missionary in the island, and came in obedience to the governor's command. "Thanks be to God!" he exclaimed "my children you are now blessed with riches; now you will be able to give way to the charitable suggestions of your hearts, and afford relief to the miseries of the distressed. "Your health, dear madam," con-

tinued he, addressing himself to Madame De la Tour, "prevents your acceptance of so advantageous an offer ; but you, young lady," said he to Virginia, "have no excuse. The sacrifice, I acknowledge, is great ; but it is the will of Providence, and your voyage will have a happy conclusion." The artful priest had no sooner finished his treacherous exhortation, than Virginia with downcast looks answered him trembling, "If it is the will of God, I will not for a moment oppose it ; but," continued she weeping, "submit with resignation."

The priest then took his leave, and returned to the castle, to acquaint the governor of all that had passed, while Madame De la Tour sent Domingo for La Varole, with whom on his arrival she consulted about Virginia's departure ; who gave it as his opinion that she ought not to go, considering it as a fixed principle, that the advantages of nature are far preferable to those of fortune, and that we should never seek for that at a distance which may be found in our bosoms : but Madame De la Tour, although she had sent for him to ask his advice, had in reality made up her mind from the

moment she heard the decision of her confessor. Even Marguerite, who, regardless of the advantages her son might have derived from the possession of Virginia's fortune, had hitherto opposed the idea of her voyage, now ceased to make the smallest objection; while Paul, alarmed at the secret conversations of Virginia and her mother, abandoned himself to melancholy, frequently exclaiming, that they were secretly plotting something against his peace, or they would not exclude him from their company. Oppressed with grief, he left the cottage, and wandered to the dwelling of La-

Varole, whom he no sooner saw than he exclaimed, "Oh! my friend, Virginia is going; already they are making preparations for her departure! Come then with me, I conjure you, and exert the influence you have over our mothers to persuade them to detain her." La Varole, unwilling to add to the despair which he saw him in, promised to comply with his request, although he was convinced that his endeavours would be useless.

The melancholy of Paul, which increased every day, excited in the maternal bosom of Marguerite the deepest affliction; and taking him

aside one day, she said, "Why will you suffer vain hopes to delude you, which perhaps in the end may prove abortive? It is time that you should become acquainted with the secret of your life and mine. Virginia is descended, by her mother's side, from a rich and ancient family; while thou art the son of a poor peasant; and you have no other relation in the world but myself."—Overcome with emotion, Paul pressing her in his arms, exclaimed, "Oh! my dear mother, since I have no relation but yourself, I shall love you still more. What a secret have you revealed to me! I now see

clearly the reason why Virginia has avoided me for these two months. The disparity of our fortunes has induced her to agree to leave her friends and the island, in order to erase, by a short absence, the remembrance of one who has been dear to her ; and I now perceive that this new accession of fortune on her part has induced her to despise me !

At length the supper hour arrived, and the two families placed themselves at the table ; when each one being agitated with different sensations, they ate but little and talked still less. Virginia rose first from

table and went out as if for a walk; and Paul following her soon after induced the two friends, and La Varole also, to follow them, in order to overhear what passed between them. It was one of those beautiful nights which is so common between the tropics, and which the pencil of the greatest artist would be unable to delineate; the moon appeared in the centre, surrounded by clouds, forming the most beautiful drapery, and spread her silver light insensibly over the lofty mountains of the island. The stars, in appearance like so many diamonds, glittering in the heavens, while their trembling and

lucid orbs were reflected on the tranquil bosom of the deep. Virginia's eyes wandered over the vast expanse, rendered distinguishable from the bay of the island by the red fires of the fishermen. Farther on, at the entrance of the harbour, she saw a light, and a shadow which proceeded from the watch-light, also the body of the vessel she was to sail in for Europe; and which, being ready to sail, lay at anchor waiting for a favourable wind. The sight of this vessel affected her, and she turned her head aside, in order to conceal her tears from Paul, who at that moment came up and seated

himself by her. . . The lovers were in this situation, when their two mother's, and La Varole arrived at the same spot, who seated themselves beneath some plantain-trees, at a small distance, from whence they might, through the stillness of the night, overhear the subject of their discourse. Paul, breaking silence first, addressed his beloved, Virginia in the following terms ; " Ah ! you you are going to leave this island in three days ! You are regardless then of the dangers you will have to encounter at sea ; an element of which you used to express so much terror." " Alas !" replied she, " I would stay

with you all my life ; but my mother commands it otherwise ; besides, my confessor tells me it is the will of God I should go, and that this life is only a trial. Oh ! my dear brother, it is a trial full of difficulty and vexation." "How," exclaimed he, "can you find so many reasons for your departure, and not one that may induce you to remain among us?—In the new world you will find another on whom you will bestow the endearing name of brother, that will belong to me no longer. You will select that happy person from among those whose birth is worthy of you, and who will be possessed

of those gifts of fortune which I have not to offer; but what shore will be dearer to you, than the one which gave you birth? (Cruel maid!" continued he, his whole frame shaking with the violence of his emotion, "I speak not of myself; who, when I shall no longer behold you in the morning; when on an evening I shall wander alone in our favourite walk, and shall gaze on the ~~same~~ trees which were planted at our birth, and, heaving a sigh, shall remember with distraction the days in which I was blest with your society, and which were consecrated to mutual friendship. Ah! Virgin-

ia, since a new destiny attracts you,) let me embark in the same vessel with you. I will reanimate your spirits in the midst of tempests far more terrible than those which used to alarm you on shore. (Your head shall recline on my bosom, and in France, whither you are going in search of fortune and grandeur, I will attend you as your slave ; and when I shall see your happiness completed, I will finish the sacrifice by dying at your feet."—Here the violence of his emotion stifled his voice ; and Virginia, as well as she was able for the sobs which every now and then interrupted her speech, made

the following reply ; “ It is for you I go, to ease you from the labour I have seen you bend under to support two families. Oh ! Paul, thou art dearer to me than a brother ; it is for your sake alone that I wish to become rich. Alas ! what has it cost me to avoid you ? Help me then,” continued she, “ to tear myself from what is more valuable to me than my own existence, ’till heaven shall deign to smile on our union ; but I will go or stay, die or live, as you think right. Brought up in the school of virtue, I could have resisted your caresses, but am quite unable to withstand your affliction.”

She had no sooner said these words, than he seized her in his arms ; and pressing her to his bosom, cried, in a tone of frantic despair, " I will go with you, nothing shall divide us."

Alarmed at this behaviour, Madame De la Tour and the rest ran towards him, the former exclaiming, " My son ! my son ! if you go, what will become of us !" The sound of her voice awakened him from his reverie, and he tremblingly repeated, " My son ! you my mother ? Impossible ! You, who would tear a beloved brother from a beloved sister ? If she goes, I will follow. You say, the governor will hinder me ; but

he cannot prevent my throwing myself into the sea, from following her by swimming ; the sea cannot be worse to me than the land ; and since you forbid my living with her, at least the vessel that bears her from the island shall pass over my remains." At this moment La Varole seized him in his arms, despair having deprived the afflicted youth of his senses ; his eyes flashed fire, while big drops of sweat hung on his manly brow ; his knees trembled, and his heart beat violently against his troubled breast. Affrighted at his situation, Virginia said to him, " Oh ! my dear Paul ! I call

to witness the pleasures of our early days, and every thing that is dear to our remembrance, that if I go, I will return one day to be your's. I call you all to be witnesses of this; and I swear, by that power who hears and sees all our actions, never to be the wife of another."

As an icy rock on the summit of the Appenines is dissolved and softened by the sun, so were the impetuous passions of Paul subdued by the voice of the beloved of his affections. He bent his head, and a flood of tears fell from his eyes;—while his mother, mingling her tears with his, held him in her arms, with-

out being able to speak. Madame De la Tour, half-distracted, said to La Varolè, "I can bear this no longer. My heart is broke. This ill-fated voyage shall not take place.— Take my son home with you. It is now the third day since any one here has slept." To this he readily assented; and addressing himself to Paul, said, "My dear friend, your sister will remain here. We will speak to the governor to-morrow; 'till then come and pass the night with me; the rest of your friends need repose, for it is now midnight." Becoming more calm by this assurance, he suffered himself to be led

away in silence ; and, after a night of great agitation, arose soon after the break of day, in order to return home. The first object which attracted his attention, on his way thither, was the female negro of Madame De la Tour ; who, being amounted on the Rock of Discovery, seemed looking earnestly toward the sea. Alarmed at this circumstance, he hailed her from a distance, and eagerly inquired where her young mistress was. At the sound of his voice Mary turned round, and began to weep ; which Paul no sooner saw, than, guessing the cause, he immediately ran to the harbour ;

where he soon learned the dreadful intelligence, that his beloved had embarked at day-break, when the vessel set sail, and was then no longer to be discerned. Enraged at this information, he crossed the plantation without speaking a word to any one, and ran on until he had gained a cluster of rocks, which appeared to raise their heads almost perpendicular to the heavens. The clouds, which continually surrounded the top of the rocks, gave birth to several springs, which fell from the profound height into the bottom of the valley situated at the back of the mountain ; but owing

to the extremity of the height, the noise of their fall was not heard in the least by the spectators, when they had attained its lofty summit. From thence he might also have a full view of the open sea ; and from hence Paul gazed on the vessel that had borne away Virginia, which, being at that time nearly ten leagues out at sea, appeared like a black spot on the extremity of the ocean. In this situation he remained, with his eyes cast upon the object, the best part of the day ; which, although it had disappeared some time, he still fancied he beheld before him ; till, at length, returning reason convincing

him of his error, he seated himself on the point of the rock, whose projection is ever beaten by the wind. On that spot he was found by La Varole, with his head reclined on the rock, and his eyes fix'd on the ground, the latter having, on missing him when he arose, set out in pursuit of him ; and it was with the utmost difficulty that he prevailed on him to descend the mountain and return to his disconsolate parent. As soon as Paul saw Madame De la Tour, he broke out in bitter reproaches against her, for having behaved so treacherously to him. Touched with his manner, and willing to un-

deceive him, she told him, that a favourable wind having sprang up during the night, the governor came about three in the morning, attended by his general officers, and the missionary, with a palanquin, for Virginia; and that, in despite of her own repugnance, her tears, and those of Marguerite, they had forced her away more dead than alive, alleging at the same time, that what they did was for the good of the whole family. "At least," said Paul interrupting her, "you might have permitted me to bid her farewell." Paul saw that his mother and Madame De la Tour were in tears;

when with a distracted air, he said, "You must now seek for some other person to wipe away your tears;" and immediately rushed out of the cottage, wandered to and fro over the plantation, La Varole following at a distance, in order to observe his motions, while the former flew eagerly to those spots which had been the most dear to Virginia. Sometimes he would seat himself on the rock where he had conversed with her last; and at the sight of the ocean, which had torn from him all he held most dear in this life, would weep bitterly. Fearful that the violent agitation of his mind

might be productive of some fatal consequence, this distressed family kept a continued watch over his steps, while his mother and Madame De la Tour entreated him in the tenderest manner, not to augment their sorrow by his despair. At length, Madame De la Tour alleviated his grief in some measure, by bestowing on him such epithets as were best calculated to revive his hopes, calling him her son, the betrothed husband of her Virginia; by which mode of treatment she at length prevailed on him to return home, and take some refreshment. At length, perceiving that his an-

guish augmented that of his mother and Madame De la Tour, and that the wants of the family required continual labour, he began with Domingo to repair the garden. Soon after, this young man, (until then as indifferent as a Creole in regard to what passed in the world,) desired La Varole to teach him to read and write in order that he might hold a correspondence with his beloved Virginia.

The long period of two years and a half had nearly elapsed before Madame De la Tour received the least intelligence of her daughter, except what she heard at the gover-

nors, that she had arrived in safety at her aunts; when she received by a vessel that stopped in its way to India, a packet, and a letter wrote by the lovely hand of Virginia. The contents were as follows:—

“MY DEAR AND BEST BELOVED MOTHER:—“*I have sent several letters since my arrival at my aunt's, but as I have never received an answer, conclude that they must have miscarried. However, I hope this will meet with a better fate from the measures which I have taken to forward it. I have shed many tears since our separation. My aunt has placed me as a boarder in a con-*

vent near Paris, where I am provided with masters of every description ; while her bounty, who refuses me nothing, furnishes me with new dresses for every season of the year, and at the same time has appointed me two waiting women, who are both dressed almost as fine as myself. She also made me assume the title of countess, and has likewise obliged me (to my infinite regret) to relinquish the name of De la Tour, for that of Montreville, your maiden name. I no sooner saw myself in this splendid situation, than I requested my aunt to let me send you some assistance ; when, to

my no small surprise, she replied, that a little would be of no service to you and that it would be better for you to remain in your present humble station : I endeavoured upon my arrival, as soon as I had learned to write, (which through my eagerness to hear from you, I soon acquired,) to send you some intelligence concerning myself ; but as I entrusted my first letters to the care of my women, I have no doubt they were destroyed. However, I transmit this through the hands of a boarder with whom I have formed an acquaintance, and send herewith her address, in hopes of receiving an answer from

you at last. But to go on with my narration. My aunt allows no one to visit me at the grate but herself, and an old nobleman, one of her friends, who she says is much delighted with my person; but, to speak the truth, I am not much so with him, nor should I, even if my heart had been disengaged. I live in the midst of riches and splendour, without a single sous at my own disposal, while my women quarrel for my left-off clothes frequently before I have worn them a day. In short, I am in reality poorer than when I lived with you, for I have nothing to give, and thus finding myself deprived of do-

ing the smallest good, I have had recourse to my needle, which I learned from you, and, through its assistance, send you and my mother Marguerite a few pair of stockings of my own making, a cap for Domingo, and one of my red handkerchiefs for Mary. I also send you a small bag filled with the seeds of various kinds of fruits and flowers gathered in the garden of the convent during my hours of recreation. I recommend to your goodness and care our old domestics, Domingo and Mary, who paid so much attention to me in my infancy.

Adieu ! dear mother, and believe me to be, your ever affectionate and dutiful daughter,

“VIRGINIA DE LA TOUR.”

Paul was very much surprised at not finding any mention made of himself, although she had not forgot the rest ; but he was unacquainted with the ways of women, who, however long their letters may be, generally reserve the most tender passages for the last. In a postscript therefore, she recommended particularly to his care some seeds which she had sent him, at the same time requesting that he would sow them on the rock where they had last conversed

together, and to name it the Farewell Rock. These seeds she had put into a little purse ; which, though it was but of small value, appeared above all price in the eyes of Paul, when he perceived a P and a V entwined together, and knew that the hair which formed the cypher once claimed the fair Virginia for its owner.

The whole family listened to this letter with tears ; and Madame De la Tour answered it in the name of all, desiring her to remain or return as she thought proper. In the mean time, envy spread several idle rumours about the island, which co-

casioned Paul no small uneasiness. The principal one of these proceeded from the persons that had brought the packet, who asserted that she was on the point of marriage, and even went so far as to name the nobleman to whom she was to be united. However, Paul at first treated it as an idle report, until some of the ill-natured neighbours, by their ill-timid pity, induced him to give some credence to their cruel information, especially as several ships arrived after that from Europe without bringing the smallest tidings of Virginia. Oppressed with the contending passions that agitated his

breast, this unfortunate youth would frequently wander to the dwelling of La Varole, in order to receive such comfort and information as the latter's experience of the world enabled him to bestow. La Varole did all he could to comfort him, and assured him he had no doubts but Virginia would soon return.

On the morning of the 25th of Feb. 1752, at break of day, Paul descried the white flag hoisted on the Mountain of Discovery; and knowing it to be the signal of a vessel's approach, ran to the town to learn if it brought any tidings of Virginia, where he learned that the

vessel was the St. Geran, of 700 tons, commanded by Captain Aubin; that it was then four leagues off, and would anchor at Port Louis the next day in the afternoon, if the wind continued favourable. The pilot delivered a packet of letters which the vessel had received from France, among which was one for Madame De la Tour; which Paul (knowing the hand to be Virginia's) eagerly seized; and kissing it, put it in his bosom, and flew to the plantation. In this letter, the lovely girl informed them that she had received a deal of ill-treatment from her aunt; and that on her refusing to marry an

old nobleman, whom she endeavoured to force on her against her inclination, she disinherited her, and sent her back at that season of the year, when she knew she must arrive at the Isle of France at the very time of the hurricanes setting in.

As soon as the letter was finished, Madame De la Tour said to Paul, "Go my son, go and inform our neighbours of my daughter's arrival."—Immediately Domingo lighted a torch, and set out with him for the habitation of La Varole; when Paul, opening the door of his cottage, sprang on his neck, and, almost wild with joy, exclaimed, "Virginia is ar-

rived. Let us go to the port, the vessel will cast anchor at day-break.

The worthy peasant no sooner heard this, than he arose ; and they set out on their way to the port.

As they drew nearer, they thought they heard distant peals of thunder ; but upon listening more attentively, they soon discovered it to be the sound of cannon repeated by the echoes. Varole shuddered at the sound, which, together with the gloomy aspect of the heavens, gave him no room to doubt of its being the signal of distress from the very ship they were in quest of.

They continued to advance with-

out daring to communicate their apprehensions to each other, and about midnight arrived at the point of the island called Golden Dust. The billows dashed against the beach with an horrible noise, covering the rocks and sands with their foam; by the assistance of whose dazzling whiteness, and phosphoric gleams, the two friends could easily discern, through the darkness, the canoes of the fishermen, which they had drawn upon the sands. At a small distance from them, at the entrance of the wood, they saw a fire, round which several of the natives were assembled; whither they im-

mediately repaired to dry their clothes, and wait the return of day, when, upon their nearer approach; they found the company busily employed in giving their respective opinions on the fate of the vessel.— To their diversity of opinions, Paul and La Varole listened in silence; while they waited with anxiety for the approach of day, which at length made its appearance in the East; but the weather still remaining hazy, they could not discover any object at sea excepting a dark cloud, which one of the company informed them was the Isle of Amber, and that it was distant about a quarter of

a league from the shore. About seven in the morning the woods resounded with martial music ; and soon after, the governor made his appearance on horse-back, attended by a troop of soldiers armed with muskets, and an immense multitude of Islanders and blacks. Immediately on his arrival, he caused the former to range themselves on the beach, and make a general discharge; which they had no sooner done, than a glimmering light appeared on the water, which was succeeded by the report of a cannon. Judging from this that the ship was at no great distance, the whole assembly ran to-

ward the place from whence the light had proceeded, when they could discern through the fog, the hull and the rigging of a large vessel. In short, they were so near, that in spite of the roaring of the waves, they could distinctly hear the boatswain's whistle, and the cries of the mariners.

It was now nine in the morning, when the *St. Geran*, perceiving that assistance was near, fired her guns every three minutes; which the governor perceiving, caused several large fires to be kindled on the strand at equal distances; he also sent to the village for provisions, planks, cable, and empty barrels.—

A vast crowd of people soon after arrived, accompanied by their slaves, heavily laden with the required articles.

Soon after this, their ears were assailed on the side of the ocean with the most terrific noises, as if a vast cataract, mingled with thunder, had been rolling down the adjacent rocks ; upon which the inhabitants set up a general cry, that a hurricane was approaching ; and the next moment a furious whirlwind dispersed the fog, and rendered the vessel clearly discernable from the shore, her deck crowded with people, her yards and mainmast laid

level with the deck, her flag shivered, with four cables at her head ; and another, by which she was held at her stern.

The St. Geran had anchored between the Isle of Amber and the main land, within a chain of breakers, which encircled the island, and which no vessel had ever entered before. She presented her head to the relentless fury of the deep ; and as the tremendous waves rushed into the straits the ship heaved to such a degree, that at the same moment as her keel was in the air, her stern plunged into the water, and totally disappeared, as if it had been devour-

ed by the surges. In this situation it was a moral impossibility for her to retreat.

At length, from the violent efforts of the ship, the cables of her head were torn away ; and as she only held by a single anchor, she was immediately dashed upon the rocks at the distance of half a cable's length from the shore. At this sight, a cry of horror issued from the spectators ; at that moment Paul, almost frantic, rushed toward the sea ; which La Varole no sooner perceived, than seizing him by the arm, exclaimed, " Hold, rash youth ! would you perish ?—

Whither are you going ?" "To save my beloved Virginia, or die with her," replied the youth. Upon which the former, perceiving that despair had rendered him deaf to all entreaty, with the assistance of Domingo fastened a long cord round his waist, to preserve him ; and laying hold of one end, they suffered him to precipitate himself into the sea ; when, sometimes swimming, and sometimes walking on the breakers, he made several fruitless attempts to gain the vessel. Often did he entertain hopes of reaching it, which the irregular motion of the sea frequently left dry : but the

billows advanced suddenly, and with redoubled fury buried it beneath mountains of water ; the waves often throwing the unfortunate youth to some distance on the beach, covered with blood and wounds, who nevertheless renewed his efforts with double alacrity, regardless of the entreaties of his friends, who endeavoured to prevail on him to desist.

At this moment the sides of the vessel began to yawn asunder, and gave way to the impetuosity of the waves ; while the wretched crew, in the last agonies of despair, threw themselves into the sea, and seizing upon such things as the waves had

swahed overboard, endeavoured, but in vain, to gain the shore. However, the attention of the spectators was engrossed by a young lady, who, at that moment, made her appearance in the gallery of the St. Geran. It was Virginia ; who, having discovered her lover, stretched out her arms to implore his assistance ; while the sight of this amiable maid, in such imminent danger, filled the bosoms of all present with unutterable grief.

At this moment, another wave more tremendous than the former drove the vessel against a rock, whe both that and the lovely maid d

appeared together. Overwhelmed with grief, La Varole and Domingo bore Paul, in a state of insensibility, away, the blood flowing rapidly from his mouth and ears ; and the governor, after recommending him to the care of his surgeon, caused him to be taken to an adjacent cottage, until he should be sufficiently recovered to be removed to the plantation, whither La Varole bent his way, with Domingo, turning over in his mind the best method of preparing the two mothers for the melancholy event ; but their surprise may easily be imagined, when, on entering the cottage of Madame

De la Tour, they found her daughter in a state of insensibility on the bed, and attended by her own mother and Marguerite, the faithful Mary, and an old negro, whom La Varole had never seen before, who all seemed to wait with breathless anxiety her return to life ; while La Varole and Domingo, amazed at the sudden turn of fortune, became as it were inanimate and void of motion ; but their attention was soon called off by Virginia showing some signs of life ; and in a short time after she opened her azure eyes to the day. The first objects that met her sight were her own mother and the

mother of her beloved Paul, who had hung over her with maternal affection, watching with the greatest anxiety for the moment that should restore her to their longing arms ; whom she no sooner beheld in this position, than uttering a faint scream of joy, she sunk into her former insensibility. It was some time before they were able to recover her ; and even then she was in so weak a condition as to preclude all conversation for the present.

The two ladies, however, were with difficulty persuaded to quit the chamber, on La Varole's representation that rest was the best remedy

for the extraordinary fatigue his lovely friend had undergone ; and they retired with him to another apartment ; where they were no sooner seated, than La Varole, after congratulating Madame De la Tour on the recovery of her daughter, expressed a wish to become acquainted with the miraculous circumstance that had so unexpectedly restored Virginia to the arms of her friends, at a time when nothing less than final dissolution seemed to hover over her devoted head. Madame De la Tour, moved with the recollection of the dangers she had mounted, and unable to speak. v

her hand to Marguerite, and from her he was referred to the negro ; who, upon seeing their embarrassment began his narration as follows:—

“ In me you behold an inhabitant of Africa, born of the royal blood, and beloved by his parents and the people whom they governed. An adjoining nation making war upon our unsuspecting tribe, proved in the end victorious, and carried best part of the natives, together with myself, into captivity, and afterwards sold us to an owner of a slave ship, who treated us more like
than human beings. At

length we cast anchor on this island, when myself, and three other of my unfortunate fellow captives, were purchased by the planter of the Black River. Thus torn, in my infancy, from all I held dear, and made the slave of a cruel master, I began to hate my existence, and to look upon all the people of your colour as tyrants and oppressors, and as people devoid of humanity, till, on escaping from the cruelty of my inhuman tyrant, chance threw me in the way of these benevolent cottagers. I need not trouble you with what passed between the amiable Virginia

my inhuman master, when she undertook a tedious journey in order to procure my pardon, since I make no doubt that you are already acquainted with that circumstance, nor of his mode of treatment after having granted her request ; your servant, Domingo, having seen sufficient, when he called upon the unfortunate runaways, to give an idea of the hardships I endured.— Several years have now elapsed, in which I experienced every day some new species of cruelty, being punished with the utmost rigour for the most trifling crimes. How-

my master dying about two

years ago, gave an unexpected turn to my fortune, as my young master, on coming to his estate, gave all the old slaves their freedom, in consideration of their past services, together with a small sum of money to help them on their journey to their native places. As for me, I no sooner found that I was my own master, than I resolved to bend my steps to this valley, in order to fix my residence near the habitation of the only good white people I had found in the colony. With this view I sat out the next morning and arrived at the beach just as Virginia was abandoned to the me-

of the relentless ocean. Recollecting her features at that moment, I plunged into the ocean, and with some difficulty succeeded in finding and bringing her to land, but in a situation that rendered it impossible to decide whether she belonged to the living or the dead.— I had no sooner reached the land, than I found that her heart had still a slight palpitation. Elated with this discovery, my strength seemed as it were recruited ; and raising her in my arms, I renewed my journey, and at length arrived safely at the cottage of Madame la Tour ! from whom I receiv-

ed the only reward I wished for—the warm acknowledgements of a grateful heart.”

The Indian had just finished his story, when Mary brought a message from Virginia, who desired the attendance of her friends, as she found herself sufficiently recovered to sustain an interview. The request was cheerfully complied with; and the whole assembly adjourned to her apartment, where a scene ensued at once both tender and interesting. As soon as the first emotions of joy were over, Virginia began to relate her adventures in near the following words:—

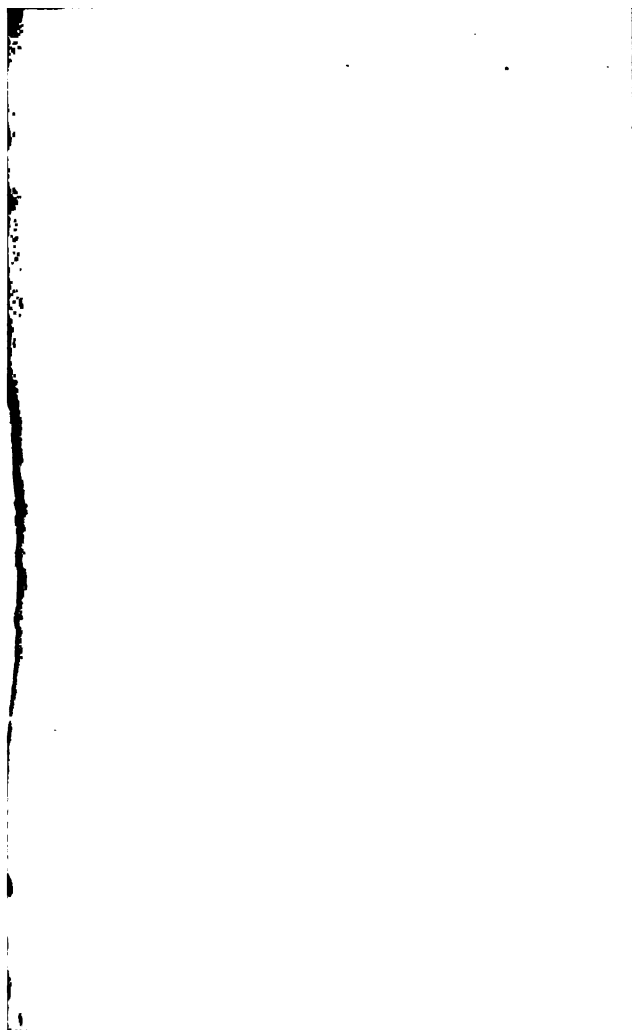
“You may remember, my dear madame,” addressing herself to her mother, “that I mentioned in the letter I sent you from the convent, that my aunt suffered no one but an old nobleman and herself to visit me at the grate, whom I too soon found was destined for my future husband. In vain did I endeavour to soften her, by representing what she owed to you, my pre-engagement, and the vows which had been registered in heaven between Paul and myself; till at length my aunt, enraged at my obstinacy, confined me to my chamber, where I experienced the most cruel treatment, be-

ing frequently kept fasting the whole day ; but," continued she with a smile, "the thoughts of once more beholding my dear Paul, and you, my beloved friends, gave me fortitude in the midst of my trials, and I remained unshaken in my resolution ; when my aunt, finding that all her endeavours to win me to her purpose were in vain, first disinherited me, and sent me home at that precise time when she knew the hurricanes set in. The rest of my adventures you are acquainted with ; and the happiness I now enjoy amply repays me for all the perils and hardships I have undergone."

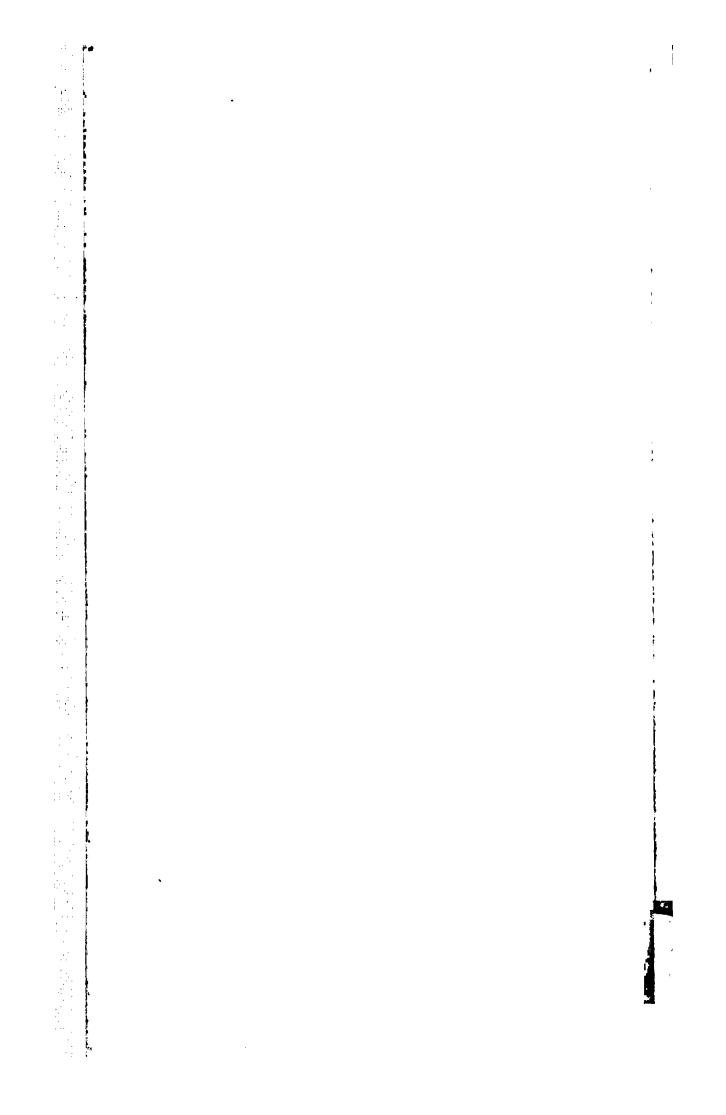
In the mean time, intelligence having reached the cottage where Paul had been left to recover, it no sooner came to his ears than he resolved to set out on his return home. The interview between the two lovers was attended with better effects than their agitated parents at first expected, and in the end proved a principal agent in the reinstatement of their healths ; which had no sooner taken place, than the two lovers were united. La Varole, officiating as father, gave Virginia away ; while tears of delight run down his furrowed cheeks on beholding his two favourites at length rendered happy.

Having conducted our readers to this important crisis in the lives of Paul and Virginia, we shall conclude with stating that they lived in the greatest harmony; while the aunt, who had been the instrument of their former sorrows, lived but a few years after; and upon her death-bed, repenting of her former conduct, made her will, in which she declared Madame De la Tour to be her sole heir—a circumstance which did not afford them much pleasure, except when they reflected that it would enable them to discharge their obligations to their friends; among whom the grateful Indian

who had saved the life of Virginia was not forgotten; and thus, after having weathered the rough sea of calamity, they at length came to a safe anchor in the harbour of happiness.









JUL 7 1936